

**Claims**

1. A pair of underpants comprising a front part (1, 32), a back part, a crotch part (2, 34) and two leg holes (3) delimited by the parts, and releasable connecting means (4, 30, 31) for connecting the crotch part (2, 34) to the front part (1, 32) and allowing an opening to be formed in the crotch area, said releasable connecting means (4, 30, 31) extending from one leg hole (3) to the other and comprising two parts one overlapping the other in the closed condition characterized in that ends (6) of a part of said releasable connecting means (4, 30, 31) are provided with flexible protection means (5, 11, 21, 33).  
5
2. A pair of underpants according to claim 1, wherein the opening to be formed in the crotch area includes the leg holes (3).  
10
3. A pair of underpants according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the flexible protection means (5, 11, 21, 33) are placed on the outer overlapping part of the releasable connecting means (4, 30, 31).  
15
- 20 4. A pair of underpants according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the flexible protection means (5, 11, 21, 33) are made of cotton, nylon or any other material suitable for straps or tapes, being relatively unstretchable and having a soft feel.
- 25 5. A pair of underpants according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the flexible protection means (5, 11, 21, 33) are in the form of ribbons.  
30
6. A pair of underpants according to claim 5 wherein the ribbons have a length of about 15 to about 120 mm.

7. A pair of underpants according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the flexible protection means (11, 21, 33) are in the form of loops (12).
8. A pair of underpants according to claim 7 wherein the loops have a length  
5 of about 95 to about 160 mm enabling the loop to hold diameters from about 30 to about 50 mm.
9. A pair of underpants according to any one of claims 1 or 8, wherein the flexible protection means (5, 11, 21, 33) have a width sufficient to cover the  
10 whole edge (6) of the releasable connecting means (4, 30, 31).